CLAIMS LISTING

1.   (Canceled)

2.   (Amended)   A method for distributing <u>digital</u> licenses <u>over a computer network from a centralized database</u> for a digital product comprising the steps of:

a)   receiving a request<u>, via computer network,</u> for product registration from a vendor, said request including a product name and a vendor identifier;

b)   assigning a product identifier and an encryption key to said product and forwarding registration to vendor, said registration including a product identifier, said key and said vendor identifier;

c)   receiving a request<u>, via computer network,</u> from a user for a user license, said request including a user name and payment information;

d)   assigning a user identifier to said user and forwarding a user license<u>, via the computer network,</u> to said user, said license including said user identifier;

e)   receiving a request<u>, via computer network,</u> for a product license from said user to use said product, said request including said user identifier and said product identifier;

f)   issuing a product license<u>, via computer network,</u> to said user, said product license including a user identifier, the product identifier and a decryption key that mates with said encryption key<u>; and</u>

<u>g)   storing in a relational database the vendor records, product records, user records and product license records, with the product record linked to the vendor record via the vendor identifier, and with the each product license linked to a user record via the user identifier</u> .

3.   (Amended)   A method for obtaining a license for digitally distributed material, comprising the steps of:

a)   downloading encrypted digital material carrying a product identifier;

b)   purchasing a ~~digital~~ <u>product</u> license to use the material, said <u>product</u> license including a decryption key to decrypt the material and the product identifier<u>; and</u>

<u>c)   obtaining a unique global user license, said user license including a user identifier;</u>

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and wherein said product license includes said user identifier and wherein when a user purchases multiple product licenses, each product license is linked to the global user license via the unique user identifier.

4. (Canceled)

5. (Original)   A method of obtaining a user license, comprising the steps of:
a) establishing a connection for data transmission between the user's computer and a license provider's computer;
b) transmitting via said data connection to the license provider a request for a user license including a user name and a system identifier that is unique to the user's computer;
c) receiving via data connection a <u>unique global</u> user license from the license provider, said user license including a user identifier assigned by the license provider.

6. (Original)   A method of obtaining a user license according to claim 5, further comprising the step of:
d) storing the user license on said user's computer.

7. (Original)   A method of obtaining a user license according to claim 5, further comprising the steps of selecting and transmitting a password to the license provider and said user license incorporating said password.

8. (Original)   A system for distributing user licenses, said system including:
a) a server connected to a user computer for data connection therebetween;
b) means for receiving from the user via said data connection a request for a user license, said request including a system identifier;
c) means for assigning and storing a unique user identifier in association with said system identifier
d) a database for storing user license records, each said user license record including a user identifier and a system identifier.

9.   (Original)   A system for distributing user licenses according to claim 8, wherein each said user license record includes a user name.

10.   (Original)   A system for distributing user licenses according to claim 8, wherein each said user license record includes a password.

11.   (Original)   A system for distributing user licenses according to claim 8, wherein each said user license record includes the user's credit card number.

12.   (Amended)   A system for distributing product licenses comprising:

a)   a server connected to a vendor computer and to a user computer for data connection therebetween;

b)   means for receiving from the vendor a request for product registration where said request includes a product name;

c)   means for assigning a unique product identifier;

d)   means for transmitting to the vendor a product registration, said registration including said product identifier and an encryption key;

e)   means for receiving from the user via said data connection a request for a product license, said request including a previously assigned user identifier and the product identifier;

f)   means for transmitting to the user a product license including a previously assigned product identifier, a user identifier and a decryption key that mates with said encryption key; and

g)   a database for storing:

    (i)   user license records, each said user license record including a user identifier and a system identifier; and

    (ii)   product license records, each said product license record including a user identifier, a product identifier and a decryption key.

13.   (Canceled)

14.   (Amended)   A system according to claim ~~13~~ 12 wherein said database stores product registration records, each said record including a vendor identifier and an encryption key.

15.   (Original)   A system for distributing licenses for a product, comprising:

a)   a product registration process for assigning to a product a unique product identifier and an encryption key;

b)   a user registration process for assigning to a user a unique user identifier; and

c)   a license distribution process coupled to the user registration process and to the product registration process for providing to the user a user license containing a user identifier and a product license containing the user identifier and a decryption key that mates with said encryption key.

16.   (New)   A system for managing rights in digital material comprising:

a)   means for downloading a digital media product containing a product identifier;

b)   means for storing downloaded digital material;

c)   registry in device for playing the material, the registry containing a system identifier;

d)   user license stored in the registry of the media player device, said user license containing a user identifier;

e)   product license stored in memory that is operationally accessible to software running on the player, said product license containing the product identifier and the user identifier of the person authorized to play the material;

f)   software for comparing the user identifier in the product license to the user identifier on the user license each time the software receives a request to play the product.

17.   (New)   A digital license structure for accessing licensed digital material product file, comprising:

a)   a user license containing a user identifier, said license stored on a computer;

b)   a product license containing a product identifier and the user identifier of a person authorized to access the product file;

c)   product file stored on the computer;

d)   license type stored in said product license, said license type determining constraints for playing and viewing product; and

e)   no license type or use constraints stored in said product file.

18.   (New) A method for distributing digital material product files, comprising the steps of:

a)   issuing a digital product license via a computer network to a user containing a unique product identifier; and

b)   distributing a digital material product file containing a product identifier, without regard to whether the user has a license to play the product file.

19.   (New) A method for distributing digital material product files according to claim 18, further comprising the steps of:

c)   issuing a user license containing a user identifier, said user identifier containing no reference to a digital material product file, nor any reference to a purchase transaction for any particular product file.

20.   (New) A method for distributing digital material product files comprising the steps of:

a)   in a central database for assigning product identifiers to products generated by multiple vendors, assigning said unique product identifier and an encryption key to a digital material product file;

b)   encrypting at least a portion of the content in the digital material product file according to said key;

c)   distributing a digital material product file containing a product identifier, without regard to whether the user has a license to play the product file; and

d)   issuing a digital product license via a computer network to a user, said product license containing a unique product identifier and the associated decryption key.

21.   (New) A method for distributing digital material product files according to claim 20, further comprising the steps of:

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e)   in a digital material product file, encrypting a portion of the content while leaving a portion of the content unencrypted to allow a user to preview the unencrypted portion before obtaining a product license to decrypt the product file.

22.   (New) A method for distributing a license to play a digital material product file, comprising the steps of:
a)   issuing a digital user license to a user via computer network containing a user identifier, said user license containing no reference to a digital material product file, nor any reference to a purchase transaction for any particular product file; and
b)   issuing a digital product license to a user via computer network, said product license containing a product identifier and a user identifier.

23.   (New) A method for distributing licenses to play multiple digital material product files comprising the steps of:
c)   issuing a single digital user license to a user via computer network, said user license containing a user identifier, and said user license containing no reference to a digital material product file, nor any reference to a purchase transaction for any particular product file; and
b)   issuing multiple digital product licenses to a user via computer network, each said product license containing a unique product identifier, and each said product license containing the same said user identifier.